

**The Roehampton Campus Project:****Using campus, collections and memories of the university as a learning and teaching resource for Humanities students****Abstract**

In this article we present a newly developed undergraduate module that is taught in the Humanities Department of the University of Roehampton. Campus and university themselves are the topics of the module. The module provides an opportunity for the students to engage academically with their environment. They study not only many interesting stories related to the campus, its buildings and artworks and the history(ies) of the university and its constituent colleges, they also explore their historical contexts. They have the rare chance to engage with original artefacts and archival materials directly unmediated by editorial and scholarly work. For their assignments the students conduct research projects that are based on the resources of campus and university. They are required to present the results of their research in a public forum to provide them, early in their university studies, with experience of public engagement.

**Keywords**

Campus resources, employability, pedagogy, history, material culture, classical reception, history of education, historiography, research methods, student research, university archives, public engagement

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## **Introduction**

Since the 1980s scholarly debates in the Humanities have shifted to new perspectives on the relationship between humans and things leading to the so-called 'material turn'. From understanding the world by focusing almost exclusively on texts and representations, research interests moved towards the examination of objects, what humans do with objects and what objects do with humans, how objects can be active agents and how they convey social relationships or form social environments (Hicks, 2010). University curricula in the Humanities increasingly reflect this change, not only in the disciplines that traditionally study objects, archaeology, art history and social anthropology, but also in history or classical studies.

Teaching with objects and through objects poses challenges in the normal classroom situation where students have little interaction with objects themselves. Commonly, learning tends to be text-based without any haptic experiences, even of the materiality of texts, as students use edited versions in analogue or digital formats. Undergraduate students rarely have any opportunities to examine original artefacts, including textual materials in archives, when learning about their topics. Museum collections and archives offer illustrative material and visual aids but groups of students during their undergraduate studies can rarely access the primary evidence they provide directly as there are numerous practical reasons preventing the regular uses of

such collections that have to do with the size of classes as well as levels of staffing and available space in public collections.

Still, introducing students early in their studies to original artefacts and their examination can provide important learning opportunities. A not uncommon perception among Humanities students in the initial stages of their university studies is the idea that all primary evidence has already been explored and that they cannot discover anything new to contribute. Encountering primary evidence unmediated by editorial presentation and previous research can provide them with a new perspective on the role of students as being and becoming researchers themselves (Anderson et al., 2006: 243ff). Spraggs (2008) and Erekson (2011) provide further guidance on developing student skills and experience through work with original items. Embedding the evidence from the university and its campus into their contemporary political, social, artistic and economic contexts provides students with a deeper understanding of their relevance within broader historiographical discourses.

Starting from investigating examples of neo-classical art and architecture on the campus of the University of Roehampton with groups of Classical Civilisation undergraduate students, a practice that started when our colleague Dr Susan Deacy first took students to visit a Georgian garden temple, we decided to conceptualise and use the whole university and campus as 'learning resources' for a second-year module in the History and Classical Civilisation programmes. Thus the students' immediate environment serves as basis for their reflective engagement with the material world and its impact. This approach enabled us to

exploit the intrinsic interest that the university and its campus holds for students. It also resolved the practical problems of introducing undergraduates to original artefacts. During the module students visit and engage directly with the university buildings, its artefacts, works of art and archival collections. The aim is to encourage them to gain a different approach to their studies through the physical experience of artefacts, buildings, spaces and our relationships with them. Teaching 'on location' provides opportunities for flexible teaching formats, from debating scholarly interpretations in front of an object and handling original artefacts to, on a more general level, discussing how inhabiting spaces that have been used, modified, recreated over time influences our relationship with the past. Students encounter their environment with a new appreciation as a 'landscape of memory' where previous inhabitants have left their traces in the buildings, gardens and artworks (Fulbrook, 2002:143).

For their assignments, the students keep a reflective journal. They also identify a research question and work with selected artefacts. As many of the artefacts of the campus and the university are unpublished they learn to examine the material as evidence for their research project without being guided immediately by scholarly authority (Rockenbach, 2011). This experience strengthens their ability and trust in their own interpretations before they engage with the historiographical debates to which their project contributes. The format of their assignment is not prescribed and students can decide in what medium and style they communicate the results of their research as long as – this is the only requirement – it is suitable for a public presentation.

Each university has its own history and unique environment and we propose that staff teaching Humanities subjects consider making more use of them in order to develop student skills and awareness and to facilitate positive communication between the university and its local community.

## **Background**

The University of Roehampton and its campus in west London have rich histories that made it a natural site for the development of campus-focused research. There is the history of the campus, its former residents, buildings, and landscaped gardens, and there is the history of the four colleges that now comprise the university, each of which began life elsewhere and found a new home at Roehampton. This is likely to be true of many university campuses, with most having histories relating to eras before and after the arrival of the university.

The history of the Roehampton campus pre-university presents a show-reel of famous faces, fashionable society and high-stakes drama. A selection of spectacular residences sprang up in the Georgian period with elite residents attracted by the leafy environment in easy reach of court and parliament. One of these residences, what is now the university's Parkstead House property, began life as Bessborough House, designed by Sir William Chambers (architect of Somerset House) for William Ponsonby, 2<sup>nd</sup> earl of Bessborough (1704-93), as a neo-classical showcase for his vast collection of antiquities. The majority of these antiquities were auctioned off when the 3<sup>rd</sup> earl and his wife – the political hostess Harriet (née Spencer) – lost most of their fortune to gambling. The

couple's surviving children spent much of their childhoods at Bessborough House: John went on to be one of the four authors of the Great Reform Act, Frederick became Governor of Malta, and Caroline became the infamous Caroline Lamb, who wrote a novel based on her affair with Byron. The Roehampton home of these influential figures can be studied in depth, while many of their letters, diaries, and possessions survive in archives in a variety of locations. The British Museum, for example, stores drawings by Harriet Ponsonby (BM 1970,1212.14; 1891,0713.446). The other houses on campus were owned by similarly intriguing families and the lives of any of these former campus residents present potential subjects for student research projects.

Further buildings on campus offer a range of research topics. Neo-classical mansions sit within gardens that have interesting social histories of their own. These plush residences share space with a 19<sup>th</sup> century mausoleum, lakes, a rockery, an ice-house, a First World War memorial and modernist buildings from across the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries that were erected when the colleges moved in. The architecture, architects, alterations and commissioning remits of all of these buildings present accessible yet fascinating subjects to explore.

The four colleges that make up the University of Roehampton are all of nineteenth-century foundation, established as teacher training centres in response to the changing educational climate. Each college was founded with its own educational and religious ideology: Whitelands Anglican, Digby Stuart Catholic, Froebel Humanist and Southlands Methodist. Digby Stuart College has been at Roehampton since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Froebel, Southlands and

Whitelands subsequently arriving one by one. In 1975, the colleges entered into an academic federation to form the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education (RIHE). The RIHE federated with the University of Surrey and achieved University status in 2000. It gained independence as Roehampton University in 2004 and became the University of Roehampton in 2011. The university retains its collegiate structure and the diverse archives and collections relating to each of the colleges. These include student records and coursework, and special collections such as The Jewish Resource Centre Collection, the Froebel Archive, and the Centre for Marian Studies. The colleges also retain artworks donated or commissioned during their histories, such as Whitelands' stained-glass windows by Sir Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris. Again, each of these histories, collections, and artworks offer potential subjects for student research. While the University of Roehampton has a particularly rich variety of buildings and collections to draw on, every university has its own history, environment and resources that can be explored, all with an intrinsic interest to their students and the local community.

### **The new module**

To use the varied and interesting resources that are available at the university in a systematic way for teaching and learning we planned to develop a second-year undergraduate module for students in the Department of Humanities. Funding from the Higher Education Academy (HEA) made it possible to appoint a project manager and a student assistant to help with the preparation and teaching of the module. The module was taught over two terms with a first term of lectures, visits and skills sessions and a second term of independent project work under

the supervision of the lecturer and help from other experts at the university. During the first term, each weekly session had a different topic that was relevant either to the history and development of the colleges and university or to aspects of the campus. These case studies are embedded into wider historiographical debates to ensure students understand their significance beyond the campus.

The study of teacher training in the four constituent colleges is contextualised in a wider discussion of women's education in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain (Watts, 2013) and feminist history more broadly (Scott, 2001). Froebelian principles of early childhood education are discussed as an example for changing perceptions of children, childhood and learning in the modern period (Hendrick, 1997; Lascarides, 2000; Nutbrown and Clough, 2014). Through the history of the colleges and the university, national educational policies of the last 175 years are explored (Abbott, 2013; Argles, 1971; Murphy 1971). Eighteenth-century neo-classical architecture and artworks are examined within a theoretical framework of classical reception studies (Hardwick, 2003; Kallendorf, 2007). Georgian houses, their architects and some of their famous inhabitants provide case studies for an engagement with class, privilege and social hierarchies (Byrne, 1986; Greig, 2013). The religious foundations of the colleges offer a starting point for a debate on the role of religious communities in education in the past and in the present (Martin, 2013). The close connections of artists belonging to the Arts and Crafts movement with Whitelands College that are well documented through their artworks and documents in the archive allow biographical research, yet another form of historical study (Caine, 2010; Vaninskaya, 2012; Carter, 2015). This variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to the



study of different aspects of university and campus contribute to the learning outcomes of the two programmes.

To provide a convenient tool to access the different resources and related literature we built a database using the open-source software, Heurist (<http://heuristnetwork.org/>; [www.roehampton.ac.uk/campusproject](http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/campusproject)). The database serves several purposes: students gain easy access to the available resources and can locate them; they can use it for their weekly preparations and for their project work; the entries in the database also illustrate multiple relationships between people, objects, buildings and archival materials. This network of links allows users to browse the entries in many different ways and find unexpected connections. And finally, the database will become a repository of successfully completed student projects. The database can be read by anyone, and as such provides a resource for other university staff wishing to draw on campus history and for interested members of the public.

The different topics require and allow a range of different teaching methods that include introductory lectures that provide a theoretical and historiographical framework for the weekly case study followed by visits to various sites on campus, as well as visits to some related sites outside the campus, including Spencer House, the London residence of the Spencer family, or Sir John Soane's Museum where numerous artefacts from the Ponsonby collection are now housed. During the visits, students explore selected buildings, artworks and collections. Teaching on location provides numerous learning opportunities that are not possible when teaching in a classroom where an object is usually isolated

and detached from this context. In front of it, students can see, describe, interpret and discuss an object, be it a work of art or a monument, often within the context for which it was conceived and made. In looking at the original object, students can see it in three dimensions, not just as a two-dimensional reproduction. They also see it at the 'right' angle and not mediated by the angle a photographer once chose.

As an example, the 18<sup>th</sup> century relief showing Hercules' Choice may be discussed here (Deacy, 2014). Through the focus on one relief students are effectively introduced to more general historiographical concepts. Microhistory as a historical research practice is discussed in detail by Levi (2001). The relief is set in the original marble mantelpiece in the centre of a large reception room in a grand 18<sup>th</sup> century house that is now one of the university's meeting rooms, the so-called Adam Room, Grove House, Froebel College. (Fig. 1) In fact, house and room were built by James Wyatt but were mislabelled as works by the architect Robert Adam. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, visitors to the family would have been greeted in this room. The relief occupies a central position there. It shows a scene that would have been immediately recognisable and familiar to any educated 18<sup>th</sup> century viewer. A visitor would have understood its meaning and the significance of this choice of motif for the owner of the house: Hercules chose a life of toil, rejected the temptations of a life of pleasure and was eventually rewarded by his elevation to divinity. In choosing this scene, the owner suggests to his visitors that he too achieved his wealth and status through virtuous toil. In this interpretation he used the ancient motif to express his self-representation.

**[insert Figure 1]**

These observations can lead to discussions about the role of classical myth in 18<sup>th</sup> century thinking and education, the reinterpretation of ancient myth within the ideological framework of the 18<sup>th</sup> century elite, or the presence of ancient motifs in everyday life. When introducing students to the relief, they can experience how they physically approach the room, the chimney and the mantelpiece and discover the relief in its centre. A modern student may need assistance to recognise the scene and its protagonists, but by confronting it in its original context, they are better able to understand how it would have been experienced by 18<sup>th</sup> century visitors and the considerable resources that went into its creation. The students' personal experience of this artwork may lead to another point of learning concerning the setting of the artwork; although it is still in its original position, the room and the house have different functions now and thus the perception of the relief by the modern viewer has also changed. In fact, because the scene tends not to be familiar and because of the typical lay-out of the modern room, it is often overlooked, actually 'not seen'. This observation can lead to discussions about changing appreciations of an object over time.

Over the course of the first term with its lectures and visits students learn about the campus and the university and their histories. They also gain increasing proficiency in describing and discussing different sites and objects supported by a growing understanding of ways to contextualise them within different theoretical and methodological approaches to their study.

The content-focused lectures and visits are accompanied by skills sessions. The first sessions address skills that are useful throughout the module, such as using

bibliographic software and databases, including the RCP database and online collections of 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century newspapers with news about campus buildings and their inhabitants. As the module progresses, further topics are explored. These topics are selected largely according to the kind of skills that enable the students to conduct their own research effectively, skills that help them to present their research, and skills that increase their employability (building on Barrow et al., 2010). Where possible, specialist staff taught these sessions, for example, the college archivists teach the 'working with archives' session, and an oral history expert teaches the 'conducting oral history projects' session with a special focus on techniques to plan and conduct interviews and on the ethical guidelines for using first-hand memories as source material (Tosh, 2015: 263).

During visits to the various college archives, students learn about the collections and how they were assembled over time. For most undergraduates, these visits provide the first opportunity to 'handle' archival materials. By touching the letters, albums, books, etc. in the archives students experience the materiality of the media that carried the texts: the different types of papers, bindings, traces of usage and annotations. Through this they gain a deeper understanding of the role the texts played when they were written or printed, adding a new dimension to their usual experience of texts that they read in edited versions, often not even analogue but in digital media. As the university collections contain many documents from previous students, the current students can relate easily to these documents as they belong to the same environment, whilst they also recognise how profoundly the experience of studying in higher education had changed over time.

Before the students use the archives for their own research they learn about the holdings, how they were inventoried and the cataloguing systems. They are also initiated into the correct ways of handling original materials, including wearing protective gloves, correct opening of folders and books with ancient bindings, and so on. When using texts and photos for their research they learn about taking photographs in a professional manner and about copyright law. The experience of using the archives and learning about collection policies provides a useful opportunity for budding historians to discuss the profound changes and challenges archives are now facing when confronted with the preservation of predominantly digital records.

It was only possible to teach such a wide variety of topics and to allow students access to university collections with the help of many colleagues. Because the module is cross-discipline, the students are often taught by staff from beyond their usual programmes thus extending their first-hand experience of the range of subjects and specialisms within the university. Academic non-teaching staff also play an essential role in the preparation and delivery of the module, including the university heritage officer, college chaplains, and archivists.

At the end of the first term students select a topic and a research question that are related to the university and its campus. During the second term students conduct their research and prepare their projects, a process that is accompanied by individual supervision and group sessions. Skills sessions in the second term focus on presenting research to different audiences. For example, in sessions on

different writing styles students train their abilities to present their work in academic, journalistic, or child-friendly styles. Further topics include:

- Communicating with different audiences (including how to and why involve the public), for example local history societies or school classes
- Using social media professionally
- Designing an effective poster
- Shooting and editing a video

The format in which the research project is presented is not prescribed, the only requirement states that the project has to be presented in a public forum either a physical forum or a digital one. Students may shoot a video or record an audio programme that can be uploaded on the RCP website, they may design a webpage, prepare a display case in the library, design a poster, conduct a guided tour or give a PowerPoint presentation to an invited audience, or create or commission an artwork that can be exhibited. It is up to the students to decide on the format of their presentation and to define their intended audience. Undergraduate students tend to have few opportunities to experience the use and impact of their university studies and research. Through the public format of their assignment in this module they are required to think about their audience and the purpose of their work in new ways (Walkington, 2015). Public engagement has become an important theme for universities. Embedded in its locality, the RCP offers the chance to engage with the local community.

The assessment in this module, however, does not consist only of the final project and its presentation but also of a journal-blog where the students reflect on the process of engaging with the various histories of campus and university. Whilst the blog in the first term is focused on their learning during the various lectures, visits and skills sessions, the blog in the second term provides a place to think about the possibilities of their research, the challenges and problems they face and how they overcome them. The reflection about the project is of equal importance to the finished project itself.

### **Experiences**

Having now carried out a full iteration of the campus project module, it is possible to reflect on what went well and what could be improved. One aspect that went particularly well was the students' level of engagement, as indicated by their attendance, contributions to class, work and feedback. Trowler and Trowler (2010) provide interesting evidence and reflection on the significance of improved student engagement across the university. Attendance was consistently good throughout both semesters. One student journal reports: 'It has been the module where I have been 'longing' for the next lecture/seminar.' Feedback suggests that this enthusiasm stemmed largely from the variety of topics, the relevance of the class discussions to their situation as students living and studying at the university, the independence of project choice and format, and the chance to leave the classroom to learn by exploring the environment. Of visiting one site, a student journal entry confides: 'Visiting the neo-classical garden temple was by far the best thing I've done on this module so far, maybe one of the best at university.' The same visit was described by another as being:

‘amazing.... like entering a secret garden.’ Attendance was good even on a trip that was held on a Sunday because of access restrictions. Students reported looking forward to the sessions to an extent that is perhaps unusual: ‘The day has come. Finally we got to visit the mausoleum.’ One journal entry encapsulates the experience of the module as a whole: ‘It was fascinating to explore.’

The approach to teaching on these sessions was deliberately varied. On most occasions, students had material to read or watch in advance in order to prepare them for the historical context of the site they would visit. The preparation helped with their understanding of the site and also their confidence and sense of ownership of the topic, an aspect that assisted them later when they returned to the material for their projects (Rogers, 2015: 155ff.). Still, on several occasions students were also encouraged to visit a site unprepared. This created an opportunity for them to engage in an immediate on-site reading of, for example, the iconography of a particular artwork. It presented them with the challenge of applying their skills in reading material culture and spaces that they had been developing. It was most effective with items (such as stained-glass windows) that were more easily accessible. Mixing familiarity and non-familiarity retained student interest and gave them diverse opportunities to use their skills; it is certainly an element that will be carried forward.

The combination of lectures/tours followed by skill sessions proved effective. Students develop their theoretical and methodological understanding and their vocational skills at the same time thus spreading tangible learning experiences across the module. The sessions also provide a change of pace and activity that



keep the 3-hour classes engaging. Whilst the lectures and visits covered a wide range of different types of history, the skill sessions provided an opportunity to gain initiation into the 'habitus' of the academic expert. Both parts will remain a key part of how the module is taught. Student feedback on the sessions was positive:

'We learnt about databases, this was my first introduction to university level databases, and although it was confusing I feel I've learnt a lot.'

'It will make the job of collecting and maintaining bibliographies much easier when it comes time to work on the project. This will of course be a useful tool in any module.'

'[Working in an archive was] the best experience of this term, if not the best experience I have so far had at university; I got to wear white gloves working with the photos in the archive!'

The level of research conducted through the student projects was also a success. The students put more time and effort into the project than we might have expected for a 20-credit module, largely because the freedom to choose their topic and to explore it through their own choice of medium proved to be very motivating. Students reported:

‘The opportunity to choose whatever interested me and to build a project from that has been a challenge but also something that I have been eager to do.’

‘The independent work aspect was enjoyable as we could choose the direction of our projects, and no doubt the skills we learnt shall be useful in third year for our dissertations.’

The subjects varied, including Froebelian educational principles, alumnae recollections of college life, student life in the early-20<sup>th</sup> century, the Whitelands Burne-Jones-Morris rose window, and highway robbery in 18<sup>th</sup> century Roehampton. Formats included research posters, recorded interviews, a presentation, and a graphic novel produced in collaboration with illustrator Ben Waggett. In future we will continue to offer the students the chance to select their own topics and formats. We have, however, considered instigating annual foci for the assignments, such as work on a selected area of the campus or on a theme, or marking a particular anniversary. This would still leave the students a wide range of options, but the relative narrowing of the range may improve the overall out-put by the aggregation of projects. Likewise, some universities may prefer to specify that students pursue projects closely tied to their discipline (e.g. classical studies students restricted to classical reception topics), while others may prefer to leave this open. The feasibility and desirability of applying foci can be best judged through communication with other contributors to the module and preferably with the students themselves.

Students benefitted enormously from the broad range of interactions with staff during the course of the module. In keeping with the findings of Kuh and Hu (2001), we found that our own interactions with students outside the classroom (on-campus tours and occasional off-campus trips) contributed to an unusually high level of faculty-student communication and benefitted the students' engagement with and participation in their learning activities.

Out-of-class contact appear to positively shape students' perceptions of the campus environment, which is very important because it directly contributes to the effort they put forth which consequently affects satisfaction and their gains. However, socially oriented contacts do not directly contribute to desired outcomes. (Kuh and Hu, 2001: 329)

Faculty-student interaction on the module felt informal while retaining an educational focus on the subjects in hand. The fact that the module staff were open about their own learning on this module probably helped to generate the collaborative atmosphere.

Through preference as much as necessity we will maintain the inclusion of interactions with staff from across university. These collaborative partners had considerable input into the students' learning and skills development. The students' interactions with a range of professionals also broadened their perspective on who works in a large organisation such as a university, and the range of skills, responsibilities and career paths available. The heritage officer, Gilly King, so important to the development of the module, led a number of site visits and

assisted some of the students in conducting their research. In response to meeting Gilly for the first time, one of the students specifically commented on the insight that they had gained into Gilly's role within the university: 'The real star of today was meeting heritage officer Gilly King. She is the heritage officer for the entire campus, and to hear what her job entails was brilliant.' The fact that staff from various branches of the university attended the final presentation of the student projects boosted the students' sense of the significance of their research. It was very positive for them to realise that people from outside their own subject areas were interested in what they had done and discovered.

Although interaction with other members of staff was crucial to the experience of the module, a well-known challenge with student research projects is the large amount of staff time needed to support the students, especially if they work in an unfamiliar environment. Our use of a VLE (Moodle) was extremely helpful in providing an extra layer of support. It was also a practical way to show-case different modes of communication (Smith, 2014: 88). There is, for example, a video by the National Library of Scotland (2009) in which the assistant curator of the John Murray Archive, Rachel Beattie, discusses the creation of a display about Lady Caroline Lamb constructed from items in the archive. Making this video easily available on the VLE helped to extend the archive/curating training. The content of the video was relevant as Lady Caroline Lamb had lived in Roehampton. And the video itself is a good example for an effective use of the medium. We also added hyperlinks to a large number of online archive databases, for training purposes but also for locating relevant material for the

projects. Eventually the students began to identify further useful sites which were then duly added to the collection.

Another successful element of the project was the public-facing nature of the student projects. Although the project formats were diverse, they were all designed to communicate with a public audience during a specially organised day conference that was attended by staff and students from the university, neighbours of the university and members of local historical societies. The public aspect of the research gave the students a greater sense of purpose in their work, increased their sense of the responsibility they had in conducting the work, and gave them a sense of achievement from recognising the contribution that they had made to other people's knowledge and enjoyment through their work. After this event, the research posters were displayed in the university library and all projects are available online within the database. This sense of ownership and achievement was hugely beneficial in developing the students' awareness of their capacity to act as professionals. Student comments included:

'I spoke with many guests about my project, the project in general, and other aspects of history, and this was a good experience for me.'

'The most enjoyable part of the day (apart from the free food and coffee) was meeting all the local people and talking to them about something I'd studied for months now.'

For the public, it was an easy way to learn more about what goes on in their local university, to meet students in a constructive and engaging context, and to hear and talk about history and culture related to their area. This was a positive experience that we intend to repeat. For the students it was also an opportunity to gain insight into historical perspectives and knowledge that exist locally. Overall, this positive experience of public interaction provided a valuable lesson for students to take forward into their professional careers, where self-confidence, the ability to share and to listen, and respect for the perspectives of those outside one's own organisation are all important assets.

It proved to be constructive that students were involved in the preparatory phase of the module. Focus groups and the student intern, Anna Browne, provided interesting insights into the student perspective of university and campus. The student voice informed our preparation especially in terms of subject matter (the focus groups expressed preferences for certain aspects of the campus and university history), assessment (the focus groups argued for more than one form of assessment, and individual rather than group projects), and in terms of structure (the focus groups had a preference for submitting project proposals at the end of the first semester rather than the beginning of the second). Student feedback indicated a desire for more opportunities to meet in the second semester than had originally been scheduled. In these additional workshops the students discussed their plans and their progress with each other. Several of the students considered this an important factor in keeping them on schedule - knowing 'how far the others had progressed' - something not to be underestimated given their limited experience of independent project

work. Once the module had been completed, student feedback led to the creation of a more detailed project planning form and a revision of the project and journal deadlines as they suggested more incremental deadlines to help them schedule the work more efficiently. Listening to the students in these matters helped to initiate changes designed to maximise their engagement and achievements, as such, we will continue to incorporate student views into the ongoing development of the module. We recommend student consultation in the development of similar projects.

One further alteration we will make in future iterations of the campus project module is the weighting of the assessments. The weight was initially distributed with 25% for the reflective journal and 75% for the project. The distribution will be altered to 50%:50%, with the intention of increasing the perceived value of the journal and therefore the amount of time and thought put into the reflection by the students on their learning and, particularly in the second semester, on the process of developing their projects (Cowan, 2014).

In future we will provide the students with more timelines as we overestimated the students' familiarity with different phases of British and world history, something that will be easily rectified with supporting material. As periods and topics covered in a campus project are very diverse, students need to familiarise themselves with a lot of new terminology. For future iterations of the campus project we will ask the class to include in their journals a glossary that can be

added to over the course of the module. This is a straightforward way to re-enforce their learning and to offer them tangible evidence of their progress.

Another element that, with hindsight, can be done differently is a more reflective inclusion of diversity in extending the database. For example, it was all too easy when establishing the history of Georgian Roehampton to focus on the aristocratic families who lived there and the database reflects this class bias. When working class people appear in it, they do so in relation to highway robbery, i.e. in crimes against aristocrats, hardly a value-neutral appearance. This bias was easy to slip into as the information about aristocrats or sensational crimes is so much more readily available than that about non-criminal working people. Given the time available, it was impractical for us to research the biographies of those employed by the estates in order to include them, however, in future we will do more to make the students conscious of this bias: by mentioning it during database skills sessions, by placing greater emphasis on the estates as centres of employment as well as residences, and by ensuring that the students have the theoretical understanding and methodological tools to pursue non-elite-focused topics should they wish to. The study of campus environments can encourage a culturally diverse perspective on history, as the connections between people, buildings, objects, and organisations will frequently prove to be complex, with global factors intersecting with the local, and issues of ethnicity, gender and class always pertinent. When combined with sufficient theoretical support, resources such as the Black Cultural Archive and its online database are practical ways to introduce research into the history of minority



groups connected in one way or another to the university and its campus (<http://bcaheritage.org.uk/>).

## **Challenges**

As with many new teaching and learning initiatives that receive external funding for their development their sustainability beyond the funding period and full integration into the curriculum can be challenging. The RCP module is designed to be taught over several years during which the successful projects will be added to the RCP online database to publicise different aspects of campus and university as they have been researched by successive groups of students. Thanks to HEA funding it was possible to develop the database and website and to support student projects. As a research-based module students were encouraged to explore research methods that may have been new to them. Some approaches were cost-neutral, some bore costs. Equally some of the project formats that did not follow the usual patterns of student assignments required extra funding. The external funding was only supporting the module preparation, the development of the database and website and the first year of teaching. To ensure the sustainability of the module, including the ongoing development of database and website and innovative student projects either additional funding sources or low-cost presentation formats need to be stipulated in subsequent years. Where there is a public-facing aspect to the student research, some universities may provide financial help through their Communications offices (or equivalents) as support for campus research and presentations is a practical way to facilitate constructive interaction between students and members of the local community. Alternatively, it is possible to integrate campus-based teaching

without incurring extra costs by doing without a database or by insisting on non-cost-bearing project formats.

The module depends on the support, expertise and enthusiasm of many members of staff, including colleagues from various academic departments and colleagues that are not on teaching contracts. Their contributions to the module are essential but usually outside their contracts and beyond the call of duty. Their ongoing goodwill to teach and supervise students on the module needs to be ensured.

With pressure from the university to teach classes in the Humanities subjects efficiently and in large groups, a module that includes practical sessions and visits often in restricted and small sites and can thus only be taught with a limited number of students will need good arguments to be maintained including its emphasis on employability skills, its potential for outreach and local impact activities or the use of the database in other modules.

### **Summary**

In this paper we outlined the main aims, benefits and challenges of the Roehampton Campus Project. Using the campus and the university themselves as the focus for student research has been found to be extremely engaging and motivating for students, while the opportunity to learn about a great diversity of different types of history, to interact with physical materials, to meet a wide variety of staff, and to present work to the public all enhanced the students' historiographical understanding, their skill levels and professional outlook.

Every university is different and unique, still, the underlying ideas and principles of the module are transferable and can be adapted to local conditions to the benefit of student development and university-community relations.

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#### Figure 1 Caption

Hercules' Choice between Vice and Virtue as depicted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century fireplace of the Adam Room, Grove House, Froebel College, University of Roehampton.

Appendix:  
Questions to consider when developing a Humanities campus project module  
or other campus-based Humanities teaching

Who can help you to find out what's on campus and campus/university history?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does your university have a heritage officer?</li> <li>• Is there an archivist managing college archives?</li> <li>• Estates may have a list of valuable items on campus (outdoor statues etc).</li> <li>• Ask the marketing team if there is an aspect of campus history that they emphasise in promotion.</li> <li>• Check with the History or Classics Department – is anyone researching or supervising projects with a local element?</li> <li>• College chaplains may know the history of their organisation's role at the university.</li> <li>• Does your university have a founding charter? Most do, typically outlining what purpose the university was founded for.</li> <li>• The University Library will be able to advise on what relevant material is already available in their collections.</li> <li>• Local museums may hold material related to the campus or the local area and community.</li> </ul>
Who can help you to find out about or contact former students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University Alumni office</li> <li>• Archivists</li> <li>• Student Experience office</li> </ul>
Once you know more about the campus and its history, consider how you might divide the material for teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By topic?</li> <li>• By area – building-by-building? Sections of campus?</li> <li>• Chronologically?</li> </ul>
Do you have colleagues who might be able to contribute one-off	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleagues in Classics and History</li> <li>• Colleagues in Art History</li> <li>• Heritage Officer</li> </ul>

<p>sessions or advice on subject specific reading material?</p> <p>What skill session topics would you include? See the main article for examples used in the Roehampton Campus Project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archivists</li> <li>• Librarians</li> <li>• Chaplains</li> <li>• Retired members of staff</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there relevant classes taking place that campus project students could sit in on?</li> </ul>
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<p>Would you like to develop a database of objects, buildings, people etc. that students can draw on (and potentially add to)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heurist. This software was used for the RCP database.</li> </ul> <p>Heurist is designed for Humanities projects and is very flexible. It is particularly adept at demonstrating relationships between records. The software is free, but you are likely to need a programmer to publish the database online. See <a href="http://heuristnetwork.org/">http://heuristnetwork.org/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Omeka: <a href="https://omeka.org/">https://omeka.org/</a></li> <li>• Neatline: <a href="http://neatline.org/">http://neatline.org/</a></li> <li>• Arches: <a href="http://archesproject.org/">http://archesproject.org/</a></li> </ul>
<p>Questions worth asking before developing a database:</p> <p>Who will host the data?</p> <p>Will the university?</p> <p>Who will maintain the database in the long-term?</p> <p>Is the university IT team able to offer you support for the software? Might this impact upon which software you choose?</p>	<p>Consider talking to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library</li> <li>• I.T support</li> <li>• ICT education</li> <li>• University website team (often located in Marketing or the Dean's office)</li> </ul>

<p>Some of these online databases</p>	<p>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography  <a href="http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/index.html">http://www.oxforddnb.com/public/index.html</a></p> <p>Public Catalogue Foundation (identify paintings)</p>
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<p>etc. may prove useful for research into campus / university history. When added to VLEs such as Moodle or Blackboard , they provide students with extra resources to explore.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.thepcf.org.uk/">http://www.thepcf.org.uk/</a></p> <p>The Nation's Art Collections <a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/">http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/</a></p> <p>National Archives Online <a href="http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/our-online-records.htm">http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/our-online-records.htm</a></p> <p>Archives Wales <a href="http://www.archiveswales.org.uk/">http://www.archiveswales.org.uk/</a></p> <p>Garden History Archives <a href="http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/gardens.htm">http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/research-guides/gardens.htm</a></p> <p>London Gardens Online <a href="http://www.londongardensonline.org.uk/index.html">http://www.londongardensonline.org.uk/index.html</a></p> <p>Aim 25: Archives in London and the M25 Region <a href="http://www.aim25.ac.uk/">http://www.aim25.ac.uk/</a></p> <p>Black Cultural Archives <a href="http://bcaheritage.org.uk/">http://bcaheritage.org.uk/</a></p> <p><i>The Times</i> Archive <a href="http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/archive/">http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/archive/</a></p> <p><i>The Spectator</i> Archive <a href="http://archive.spectator.co.uk/">http://archive.spectator.co.uk/</a></p> <p>Burney Archive (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century newspapers, university library may provide access)</p> <p>London Metropolitan Archives <a href="http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives/Pages/search.aspx">http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives/Pages/search.aspx</a></p> <p>Croft's Peerage <a href="http://www.cracroftspeerage.co.uk/online/content/introduction.htm">http://www.cracroftspeerage.co.uk/online/content/introduction.htm</a></p> <p>British Monarchy Official Site <a href="http://www.royal.gov.uk/HistoryoftheMonarchy/KingsandQueensoftheUnitedKingdom/KingsandQueensoftheUnitedKingdom.aspx">http://www.royal.gov.uk/HistoryoftheMonarchy/KingsandQueensoftheUnitedKingdom/KingsandQueensoftheUnitedKingdom.aspx</a></p> <p>English Heritage Professional Page <a href="https://www.historicengland.org.uk/">https://www.historicengland.org.uk/</a></p>
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	<p>Clergy of the Church of England Database  <a href="http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/">http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/</a></p> <p>Old Bailey Online  <a href="http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/London-life.jsp">http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/London-life.jsp</a></p> <p>John Murray Archive (Nat. Library of Scotland)  <a href="http://digital.nls.uk/jma/">http://digital.nls.uk/jma/</a></p> <p>Further sites of possible interest:</p> <p>Roehampton Campus Project Database  <a href="http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/campusproject">www.roehampton.ac.uk/campusproject</a></p> <p>University of Manchester's Heritage pages  <a href="http://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/history-heritage/">http://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/history-heritage/</a></p> <p>University of Essex 50 years anniversary pages  <a href="http://www.essex.ac.uk/fifty/exhibition/default.aspx">http://www.essex.ac.uk/fifty/exhibition/default.aspx</a></p> <p>LSE Archives  <a href="http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/collections/featuredCollections/archives.aspx">http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/collections/featuredCollections/archives.aspx</a></p> <p>Roehampton Archives  <a href="http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/Archives_and_special_collections.aspx">http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/Archives_and_special_collections.aspx</a></p> <p>Sir John Soane's Museum Antiquities  <a href="http://www.jeromeonline.co.uk/antiquities/">http://www.jeromeonline.co.uk/antiquities/</a></p> <p>Oral History Society – Practical Advice  <a href="http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/practical-advice.php">http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/practical-advice.php</a></p>
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What student project formats will you support?	<p>Options include: Webpages, Booklets, Posters, Presentations, Tours for students, staff, schools, or community groups, Interactive learning objects (using e.g. Xerte), Collaborative artworks, Student radio programme.</p> <p>RCP Assessment criteria:  'Marks will be awarded for identification and definition of a suitable research topic, depth and originality of research, appropriate matching of material to audience, clarity of output, and detail and literacy of project journal.'</p>
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	<p>The university's teaching and learning office probably have guidelines on assessment criteria for non-traditional assessments.</p> <p>Assessment criteria should contain details of the conditions under which projects will or will not be presented to the public.</p>
<p>Do you wish to make the projects public-facing?</p> <p>Would there be costs? If so, how would they be met?</p>	<p>Personnel in Marketing, the Alumni Office, or the Outreach Co-ordinator may be able to facilitate contact with potential partners, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local history groups</li> <li>• Older people's groups</li> <li>• Faith groups</li> <li>• Local schools / sixth-form colleges</li> <li>• Local museums</li> <li>• Local businesses</li> </ul>
<p>Some questions to consider in relation to public-facing elements of the student projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent will contact with the public be student-led? Will they contact organisations or individuals themselves? Will you contact them? Will there be a mixture of both?</li> <li>• Will you invite a particular audience? Advertise? Both?</li> <li>• Do you wish to involve the students in promoting?</li> <li>• Will children be coming onto campus? If so, what are your university's Child Protection policies?</li> <li>• Which area of the university is effective / available for exhibitions? Will the library allow student displays?</li> <li>• Will you make the assessment deadline and the public facing event date the same? We would recommend having an assessment deadline (or provisional deadline) 1-2 weeks earlier than the date of the public event.</li> </ul>